



RISK MANAGEMENT

Hurricane Preparedness Tips for the Real Estate Industry

Whether you are a property manager, real estate investor, or a landlord, a natural disaster like a hurricane has the potential to cripple those in the real estate industry. For those living on the coastline, hurricanes can create uncertainty and instability when investing in real estate.

During the U.S. hurricane season, it's not uncommon for a coastline property to weather multiple tropical storms back-to-back. Water weighs around 1,700 pounds per cubic yard, and the pounding and friction of water against a property for extended periods can cause extensive damage or even demolish buildings that aren't designed to withstand these pressures. Even buildings that are engineered specifically to withstand hurricanes are only more resistant to this force, not completely invincible.

CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE INVESTING IN A PROPERTY

A good way to know your property's risk of hurricane damage annually is to check the Hurricane Risk Index, which rates each county's relative risk for hurricanes in comparison to the rest of the United States. Before buying a property near the coast, you should consider this index and the engineering of the building. Was the building engineered to withstand hurricane winds and rain?

Another thing to look into before buying a coastal property is to make sure your insurance policy covers windstorms. In some high-risk areas, wind coverage may be excluded, so you need to make sure that you will be able to get coverage before getting tied down into a property that is likely to receive damage if a hurricane arises. Another type of insurance you will need is flood insurance, which is generally not included in a standard insurance policy.

PROTECTING YOUR PROPERTY FROM DAMAGE IF YOU HAVE A HIGH HURRICANE RISK INDEX

1. Keep a trusted restoration company on file

One of the most important things you can do to protect your property from a hurricane is to find a restoration company that you trust. If the weather conditions create a strong enough hurricane that hits your property, you can only do so many physical preparations before the strength of the hurricane takes over. There is no way to make a residence completely hurricane-proof, so if you are at risk of encountering a hurricane, you should find a reliable restoration company that can respond quickly to any given disaster that could ensue. Restoration companies have the proper equipment and certifications to deal with multifaceted issues that arise with property damage.

The National Disaster Solutions (NDS) team quickly responds to disasters to ensure that clients can get back to a normal routine as quickly as possible. NDS is available every day of the year to respond to natural disasters and restore your property from water damage, fire damage, mold growth, and storm damage.

2. Create an emergency plan of action

Property owners and managers should create a playbook that outlines the details of what they should do in the event of a hurricane. The goal of this playbook is to outline everything that you need to do to prepare for inclement weather. Creating a plan also ensures that you

and anyone else on your emergency response team are all on the same page. You should activate this plan once a hurricane watch has been issued. This plan should include things like the following:

- A list of materials needed to prepare the building for hurricane conditions like sandbags, plywood, flashlights, caulk, and sewer backflow valves
- A comprehensive list of the things you need to do to prepare your property before the severe weather conditions arise
- Review your insurance policy and make sure that it's up to date

3. Keep a complete record of key contacts

Make sure that you have the contact information for all your tenants (if applicable) and their emergency contacts, the local police and fire departments, your insurance agent, Federal Disaster Assistance (FEMA), the American Red Cross, and anyone else you may need to contact.

4. Keep your tenants updated

For those with tenants: Keep your tenants updated automatically with a resident alert system that sends automated alerts to all your tenants at once. This is the fastest way to alert them of evacuations, weather updates, and instructions on how to prepare their residence. By instructing each tenant on how to prepare properly, you can ensure that damage will be kept to a minimum. Finally, make sure that you have provided information on emergency evacuation routes, a map of the nearest hurricane shelters, and emergency contacts.

5. Prepare your property

Follow through on your emergency playbook by preparing your property. Don't forget key preparations like:

1. turning off the main gas valve,
2. installing storm panels, plywood, or shutters over all windows, skylights, doors, and open vents,
3. taping exposed glass to protect it from shattering,
4. inserting wedges in sliding patio doors,
5. elevating appliances and furniture off the floor and covering with plastic,

6. keeping swimming pools filled to 12 inches below the edge and adding additional chlorine,
7. lowering radio and television antennas to protect satellite dishes,
8. closing all outdoor electrical outlets and covering them with duct tape, and
9. securing garage and porch doors.

There are many other things you can do to protect your facility and you should make sure that you do all that apply to you.

TRUST NATIONAL DISASTER SOLUTIONS TO HELP YOU WEATHER THE STORM

You can never make your property fully invincible to strong storms like hurricanes. Once the storm has passed and it is safe, return to your property and assess what damages have occurred. Contact your insurance company if your property has sustained damages that need repairing. National Disaster Solutions (NDS) works with a wide variety of insurance companies to ensure that clients receive needed assistance.

The National Disaster Solutions (NDS) team specializes in getting businesses back on track swiftly and effectively. The NDS Prime Program offers proactive solutions designed to ensure successful recovery in the face of emergencies and natural disasters. From emergency planning to reconstruction, the NDS Prime Program covers all aspects of disaster recovery. Members of the NDS Prime Program receive priority response any day of the year – if you experience a disaster; you can trust that NDS be there.

With NDS Prime, you can gain peace of mind knowing that expert support is readily available to facilitate a swift return to normal operations in the event of property damage or loss.

Safeguard your property with National Disaster Solutions and AssuredPartners. Contact your [AssuredPartners representative](#) today for immediate assistance. We're here for you every step of the way.